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## THE SUBLIME SOCIETY OF BEEFSTEAKS.

THE sponsors of the famous convivial association, lately dissolved, after a merry existence of a hundred and thirty-four years, had good reasons for choosing a designation sufficiently strange to distinguish it from other societies of a similar character. The outer world, however, from the first ignored the long-winded title, and would call it the Beefsteak Club, thereby causing much unnecessary confusion. Only the other day, we were told by one of our daily instructors that the Sublime Society was the only London club that had ever permitted a woman to share its privileges and pleasures—the said woman being that sometime pet of the public, Margaret Woffington. The truth is, that the club of which the beautiful theatrical queen was enthroned president had nothing to do with London, but was attached to the Dublin Theatre-royal; indeed, it could hardly be called a club, seeing all expenses were defrayed by Manager Sheridan, who likewise invited the guests—generally peers and members of parliament who patronised the dramatic temple of which he was master. Victor says such weekly meetings were common to all theatres, it being a custom for the principal performers to dine together every Saturday, and invite 'authors and other geniuses' to partake of their hospitality.

If any such convivial society was entitled to be called the Beefsteak Club, it was certainly that described by Chetwynd as composed of the chief artists and great men of the nation, and alluded to by the *Spectator* when it remarks: 'The Beefsteak and October Clubs are neither of them averse to eating and drinking, if we may form a judgment of them from their respective titles.' Ned Ward declares it was started by some seceders from the Whiggish Kit-cat Club, desirous of proving substantial beef was as prolific a food for an English wit as pies and custards for a Kit-cat beau. Their first meeting-place was 'at the sign of the *Imperial Phiz*, a public-house in the Old Jewry, in repute for its steak-cookery and its two-threads.' The members elected an Irish comedian their providore

or president; and to distinguish him from the rest, 'made him a knight of St Lawrence, and hung a silver gridiron about his neck by a green silk ribbon, as a badge of the dignity they had conferred upon him, that when he sang *Pretty Parrot*, he might thrum the bars of his new instrument, and mimic a haughty Spaniard serenading his donna with guitar and madrigal.' Ward owns they could not have chosen a better man, since none could boast a greater variety of qualifications for the promotion of becoming mirth, he being such a master of humour and gesticulation, that he could change his shape and mien, and put on any man's gesture and manner with wonderful exactness. This gift the president turned to the benefit of the club, by making it his practice to represent any absent member, thus insuring a full house, no one caring to be made a laughing-stock for his club companions. This Irish comedian was Richard Estcourt, a man counting among his friends such men as Pope, Steele, Parnell, and the Duke of Marlborough; while the general public esteemed him as one of the ornaments of the stage. Cibber, prompted perhaps by professional jealousy, calls him a languid, unassuming actor; but owns at the same time that he was so unequalled a mimic that no man or woman could move or speak before him but he could carry their voice, look, mien, and motion instantly into another company. Steele praises him as the first mimic that ever gave the beauties as well as the deformities of his original; and so perfect was he in this way, that he even fell for the time into the way of thinking of the person he imitated. Estcourt died in 1712, having enlarged his acquaintances and shortened his days in his vocation as mine host of *The Bumper*.

Dr King, dedicating his *Art of Cookery* to the Beefsteak Club, writes:

He that of honour and of mirth partakes,  
May be a fit companion o'er beefsteaks;  
His name may be to future times enrolled  
In Estcourt's book, whose gridiron's framed with gold.

The book here mentioned was one in which the

president entered every witty saying uttered at the table whereon the beef of Old England appeared, roasted, fried, broiled, and stewed, according to the various tastes of the diners. The club were not left long undisturbed: the boys of Merchant Taylors' School took it into their mischievous heads to assemble round the tavern doors upon club nights, and shout: 'Huzza, Beefsteak!' a tribute of admiration quite unappreciated by those it was intended to honour, who, 'not affecting popularity, and choosing rather to be deaf to all public flatteries, thought it an act of prudence to adjourn from thence to a place of obscurity, where they might feast knuckle-deep in luscious gravy, and enjoy themselves free from the noisy addresses of the young scholastic rabble; so that now (1745), whether they have healed the breach and are again returned into the Kit-cat community, or whether, like the Calves'-head Club, they remove from place to place to prevent discovery, I shall not presume to determine; but at present, like Oates's Army of Pilgrims in the time of the Plot, though they are much talked on, they are difficult to be found.'

How the Sublime Society of Beefsteaks, which abhorred the idea of being set down as a club, came to be founded is a matter of some little doubt. Edwards says: 'Mr Lambert was for many years principal scene-painter to the theatre at Covent Garden. Being a person of great respectability in character and profession, he was often visited, while at work in the theatre, by persons of the first consideration both in rank and talent. As it frequently happened that he was too much hurried to leave his engagements for his regular dinner, he contented himself with a beefsteak broiled upon the fire in the painting-room. In this hasty meal he was sometimes joined by his visitors, who were pleased to participate in the humble repast of the artist. The savour of the dish, and the conviviality of the accidental meeting, inspired the party with a resolution to establish a club, which was accordingly done, under the title of the Beefsteak Club, and the party assembled in the painting-room. The members were afterwards accommodated with a room in the playhouse, where the meetings were held for many years; but after the theatre was rebuilt, the place of assembly was changed to the *Shakspeare Tavern*, where the portrait of Mr Lambert, painted by Hudson, makes part of the decorations of the room in which the party meet.'

According to another story, the Society claimed for its founders the matchless Lun, the inventor and unrivalled exponent of English pantomime, and the most dashing and daring soldier of his age—Pope's friend and Marlborough's foe, equally at home conquering a province or courting an opera-singer—Mordaunt, Earl of Peterborough, who

Shone in all climates like a star;  
In senates bold, and fierce in war;  
A land commandant and a tar.

The association was not so very incongruous. The sword of the harlequin warrior had wrought well-nigh as sudden and unexpected changes upon the world's stage as the wooden bat of the harlequin of harlequins effected upon a less mighty one. The tale goes that the earl was in the habit of popping in upon Rich when he was busy constructing his models and pantomimic properties, and 'who shall say,' as Mr Tom Taylor pertinently observes, 'that he did not invent some of Rich's most wonderful

tricks and transformations, perhaps older as he then was, devise for harlequin some peculiarly daring leap, or altogether daring animation business?' One Saturday he staid so long that Rich's dinner-hour came round, and the latter duly laid his cloth, and set the gridiron over the fire to cook his modest steak. As his visitor shewed no signs of departing, the actor could but ask him to join him at his meal; and so enjoyable did fare and entertainment prove, that Peterborough promised to dine at the theatre again on the following Saturday, and bring a friend or two with him; and out of this simple piece of hospitality sprang the most successful assembly of good fellows ever formed.

Although it would be pleasanter to think the reverse, the probability is in favour of Edwards's account being the correct one, two circumstances telling heavily upon his side. First, the fact that the meetings of the Steaks were originally held at the theatre in which Lambert painted, instead of that of which Rich was manager; and secondly, the non-occurrence of the Earl of Peterborough's name in the list of the original members—the twenty-four being Lambert, Hogarth, Rich, John Thornhill, Lacy Ryan, Ebenezer Forrest, Robert Scott, Thomas Chapman, Dennis Delane, John Boson, Francis Triveton, Sir W. Saunderson, Richard Mitchell, Henry Smart, John Huggins, William Huggins, Edmund Tafnell, Thomas Salway, Charles Neale, Charles Latrobe, Alexander Gordon, Hugh Watson, Gabriel Hunt, and William Tathall. It must be confessed there are not many names known to fame among the two dozen. However it originated, it is certain their sublimities commenced their merry meetings in 1735, and spite of their professed contempt for it, they did not disdain to imitate the old Beefsteak Club in some matters. They had their record of *bon mots*; their president wore a silver gridiron pendent from an orange ribbon: and when Mr Justice Welsh filled the office he used to don a hat decorated with ribbons, something like that once worn by the so-called 'beef-eaters.' They had their insignia and their uniform too, the latter being a blue coat with red cape and cuffs, bearing buttons with the initials B. S. upon them. The motto of the Society was Steaks and Liberty; its dining hour five o'clock; its season from the first Saturday in November to the last in June; its fare beefsteaks hot from the gridiron, marrow pudding, and toasted cheese, washed down with the primest old port and the best of punch; with the accompaniments of song, jest, and uproarious fun—in short, the Steaks aimed at realising Johnson's definition of a club, and by all accounts succeeded.

The *Connoisseur* lamenting, in 1754, that roast beef is utterly banished from good society, exclaims: 'Our only hopes are in the clergy and in the Beefsteak Club. The former still preserve, and probably will preserve, the rectitude of their appetites, and will do justice to beef wherever they find it. The latter (who are composed of the most ingenious artists in the kingdom) meet every Saturday in a noble room at the top of Covent Garden Theatre, and never suffer any dish except beefsteaks to appear. These, indeed, are most glorious examples; but what, alas! are the weak endeavours of a few to oppose the daily inroads of fricassees and soup-maigres?' Another proof of the reputation the Society had achieved is presented in Walpole sneering at it: 'I scratched my name out

of the Society of Antiquaries, and what was I the better? Lord Buchan chose me into his congregation of Wiseacres at Edinburgh! Nay, I have been called names; I have been styled in magazines an *ingenious and learned author*! now I am to be a Fellow of an Academy in Germany. I wish I do not live to be a member of a Beefsteak Club.' It is evident, too, that the Steaks are meant when he reports: 'The wicked affirm that very lately at a club with Mr Wilkes, held at the top of the playhouse in Drury Lane, Lord Sandwich talked so plainly that he drove two harlequins out of the room!'

At the top of the playhouse the Society continued until the theatre was burned down in 1808, when they had to bewail the destruction of their table service, fifteen hundred pounds' worth of old port, and, greatest loss of all, their archives; a loss, says a member of the period, 'the lovers of wit and pleasure have much to deplore, inasmuch as not only the names of many of the early members are irretrievably gone, but what is more to be regretted, some of their happiest effusions.' After this untoward accident, the Steaks found a temporary home at the *Bedford* in Covent Garden, until one of themselves, Mr Arnold, was able to welcome them to a permanent lodging at the English Opera-house, better known as the Lyceum Theatre, where they pursued the even tenor of their enjoyment, until another fire, in 1830, compelled them to seek their former place of refuge. When the theatre was rebuilt, the Society took possession of 'a little Escorial in itself, with doors, wainscoting, and roof of good old English oak, ornamented with gridirons as thickly as Henry VII.'s Chapel with the portcullis of its founder; while Rich's own gridiron, that had defied the assaults of fire, adorned the ceiling of the chamber, looking down upon the busy cooks preparing the feast in sight of the feasters, but parted by a grating surmounted by the lines:

If 'twere done, when 'tis done, then 'twere well  
It were done quickly.

Many of the Society's belongings were gifts, probably upon election. The Duke of Sussex gave two dozen water-plates and eight dishes; Lord Suffolk, a silver cheese-toaster; Sir John Boyd, six spoons; Barrington Bradshaw, a punch-ladle; Bolland, a cruet-stand; and so on. Everything that could be so distinguished was marked with a gridiron; even the table-cloths bore the homely blazon.

It would be singular if a society admitting statesmen, peers, lawyers, artists, actors, poets, playwrights, wits, and men of fashion, could not boast some celebrities. Unfortunately, no records exist enabling us to do the Steaks justice; but we may mention the notable names of Gay, Tickell, Aaron Hill, Arthur Murphy, Theophilus Cibber (the good-for-nothing husband of the great actress), Bonnel Thornton, Bubb Doddington, 'Leonidas' Glover, Hoadley, Hudson the portrait-painter, Jolly John Beard of Ranelagh renown, Crossdill (the first violoncello-player of his day), the two Colmans, Fox, Sheridan, Sheridan's brother-in-law (William Linley), and his long-suffering treasurer, Dunn. We are in doubt about Tom Moore, not knowing whether it was as member or guest that he engaged to meet Brougham and Morris at the Steaks, but broke his promise through staying too long at a prize-fight, that proved not altogether so

horrid as he expected. Royalty figured at the select board in the persons of the Prince of Wales (for whose sake the number was increased by one) and his two brothers, the Dukes of Clarence and Sussex. Garrick was long a delighted and delightful sharer in these weekly jovialities. One evening, he was declaring how much his feelings would be hurt if he could not lay his hands upon a manuscript when the author demanded its return. Murphy exclaimed: 'A fig for your hypocrisy! You know, Davy, you mislaid my tragedy two months ago, and I have no doubt you have lost it. 'Yes,' answered Garrick; 'but you forget, you ungrateful dog, that I offered you more than its value. You might have had two manuscript farces in its stead!' Davy sometimes made himself ill with steaks and arrack-punch to follow, and upon one occasion was so loath to leave their company, that the gods of Drury Lane began to roar for Ranger. When he did obey the repeated summonses of his fellow-patentee, Dr Ford, the latter said: 'I think, David, considering the stake you and I have in this house, you might pay more attention to its business.' 'True, my friend,' responded the impenitent actor; 'but I was thinking of my steak in the other house.'

Wilkes writes to Churchill the poet: 'Your friends at the Beefsteaks inquired after you last Saturday with the greatest zeal, and it gave me no small pleasure that I was the person of whom the inquiry was made.' Wilkes (whose admission caused the retirement of Mr Justice Welsh) shocked the not particularly strait-laced fraternity by the presentation of a copy of his disreputable *Essay*, and was obliged thenceforth to stay away from their meetings; although when he went abroad, the Society made him an honorary member. His friend Churchill soon afterwards had to avoid expulsion by resignation, when his conduct to his wife became town-talk. The poet laid this to the door of Lord Sandwich—who had moved in parliament that Wilkes should be arrested—and revenged himself by portraying his quondam boon-companion as one who

Wrought sin with greediness, and courted shame  
With greater zeal than good men seek for fame.

Strangely enough, before the year was out, 'Jemmy Twitcher' himself was expelled the Steaks for blasphemy. The same fate was suffered by John Kemble 'for his mode of conduct.' What his mode of conduct was is more than we know. One of the favourite butts for the wits of the club was Lord Eldon's secretary, Wilson, the lucky steward, solicitor, and residuary legatee of Lord Chedworth. He never heard the last of his visit to Paris, where he declared the *boulevards* were delicious eating, and to having called for a *paysanne* for his dinner. Recorder Richards, never absent except on gout days, was another source of fun. He took upon himself to pass sentence upon any rule-breakers. 'Having put on Garrick's hat, he proceeded to inflict a long wordy harangue upon the culprit, who often endeavoured, most unavailingly, to stop him. Nor was it possible to see when he meant to stop. But the imperturbable gravity with which he performed his office, and the fruitless writhings of the unlucky being on whom the shower of his rhetoric was discharged, constituted the amusement of the scene.'

It was the custom for the president to give the

signal for raising the curtain before the kitchen exactly as the clock struck five. At nine, he vacated his seat, the new occupant of the chair becoming the mark at which every one aimed the arrows of his tongue. A city alderman was once so badgered, that he exclaimed: 'Would to Heaven I had another vice-president, so that I had a gentleman opposite to me.' 'Why should you wish any such thing?' cried Cobb, John Company's secretary: 'you cannot be more opposite to a gentleman than you are at present!' Sir John Hippisley, who Windham said was very near being a clever man, had a curious fancy for visiting great criminals. When Patch lay awaiting execution for the murder of Mr Bligh, Sir John saw him in Newgate, and tried to extract a confession; but he only got a promise that all he had to be revealed should be revealed on the scaffold. Sir John kept the appointment, and attracted the attention of the crowd by his conference with Patch. An old countrywoman mistook Hippisley for the murderer, and departed before the ceremony was over, her curiosity being quite satisfied. A few days afterwards, she happened to run against Sir John in Cheapside, and screaming out: 'It's Patch, it's Patch! I saw him hanged!' fainted away. This delicious incident found its way to the Steaks; and at their next meeting, a mock-inquest was held, the jury ultimately finding that Sir John *was* Patch. The victim of mistaken identity did not care to face the humour of the Steaks, and resigned rather than do it. One of the best of presidents was the Duke of Norfolk, who liked anything in the way of good living, and plenty of it. He used to discuss a fish-dinner at the Piazza tavern, preparatory to his Saturday repast, at which he would dispose of three or four pounds of steak, and finish off with a salad of beet-root and onions. It was to his liberality, excited by the after-dinner eloquence of Kemble, that Captain Morris, the loving lyrist of the 'sweet shady side of Pall-Mall,' owed the ease of his latter days. The captain was the most constant of Steaks, never allowing anything to keep him from his post as punchmaker. For the Steaks he wrote his best songs, and to the Steaks he sang them, and won the smile of the gay and the nod of the grave. In 1831, he resigned the laureateship of the Society, and bade a graceful adieu to the world, in which few men had found more delight and comfort, singing—

In the close of Life's chapter, ye high favoured few,  
Take my Muse's last tribute—this painful adieu!  
Take my wish, that your bright social circle on earth  
For ever may flourish in concord and mirth;  
For the long years of joy I have shared at your board,  
Take the thanks of my heart—where they long have been stored;  
And remember, when Time tolls my last passing knell,  
The old bard dropped a tear, and then bade you farewell!

Four years later, however, he revisited the scenes of his happiest hours, to receive a handsome silver bowl as a token of remembrance; and the ninety-year old lyrist acknowledged the gift with an appropriate stave. He lived, cheery to the last, for three years more, and justified Curran's prophecy: 'Die when you will, Charles, you will die in your youth.'

For some reason or other, the Sublime Beefeaters resolved to commit 'happy dispatch;' and the deed was consummated upon the 7th of April in the present year, when the fatal hammer dispersed far and wide all the goods and chattels of the most successful convivial society ever established. As might be expected, fancy prices were the order of the day. One punch-ladle, dating from the year 1735, brought L.14, 5s.; some of the spoons reached over 13s. an ounce; and a hunting-knife, attributed to Cellini, went for L.84. The port fetched from 93s. to 95s. a dozen; while some of the wine-glasses reached 34s. per pair. George IV's chair was sold for L.20, that of the Duke of Sussex for the same; Earl Dalhousie's went for L.14, and Lord Saltoun's for the like sum. Morris's chair fetched L.9, 10s., and his portrait just a sovereign less. The bust of Wilkes, rather the worse for wear, was knocked down for 22 guineas. Garrick's hat went cheap at 15s., considering two pewter quart pots cost the buyer above L.4. The presidential chair fetched L.7, 10s.; the president's badge, L.23, 10s. 6d.; and, to conclude, a well-known firm, to whom the travelling public owe some gratitude, became the owners of the gridiron of gridirons at an outlay of L.5, 15s.

## A COUNTY FAMILY.

### CHAPTER XI.—INSULA IN INSULÂ.

WITHIN ten hours' sail by steamer from Southampton, lies one of the most charming islands in the world. Though it acknowledges English rule, it is known, except through the geography books, but to few Englishmen; and it is so small, that one can scarcely see it upon the map. So small, and yet so grand. Huge cliffs still form its walls, albeit they are undermined and tunnelled everywhere, for the very entrails of the little isle are devoured by the raging seas. Six days out of seven (or so), it is set in a caldron of boiling waves; no boat can reach it, no boat can leave it. But on the seventh, as on some ocean Sabbath, it reposes calmly on a far-stretching deep, of Mediterranean hue. In summer-time (as it now happens to be), there is sometimes 'a week of Sundays.' But even in summer, and when the sea—which on the most windless day never ceases to hiss and foam immediately about it—is comparatively calm, no stranger may land on this enchanted isle. It has indeed one tiny harbour, but you might sail round and round, and never hit upon it; and when you found it, you would be no better off, were it not for the skill of man, that has worked a passage through the semicircle of solid rock into the heart of the island.

Across the harbour is built a break-water, very small but very strong, which leaves a narrow passage for such small craft as may venture to enter in. Even this snug haven is no shelter from the white malice of the ocean in its winter wrath; for a sailing-packet that had taken refuge there was once carried right over the sea-wall, forty feet in height, and then cast back again in the same perilous fashion, as it were in majestic disdain. It is the isle itself, and not mere ships (of which the sea has a plenty in those parts), that the waves are wild for; and they will have it some day, as they swore to do thousands of years ago. It is said, I know not with what truth, that at one time this dot, this atom of land,



was the extremity of a promontory from yonder foreign coast a score of miles away, and that the winds and storms have helped these foam-tipped thunderers to all the rest except this fragment, around which they leap and rage, and beneath which they roar and grumble, and above which (and right across it) they spout their sheeted spray.

It is no wonder they covet it; for the aforesaid tunnel from the harbour leads directly into Eden. From a scene of fury and foam, you step at once into quiet fairyland—a region of dell, and pasture, and shrubbery, and where, if the trees are small and scanty, the fuchsias are many, and, in bulk and luxuriance, trees. Nature made a garden here, with the original intention, as it would seem, of admitting not even an Adam and an Eve. But human beings got into it somehow, even before the tunnel era. There have been people on the little isle for many an age. The Romans 'dropped their money' upon it in the same reckless way that distinguished them elsewhere, so I suppose they must have got there. It is difficult even for modern folks to spend money in the island in any other way. There are no diseases, and therefore no doctors' bills (or perhaps *vice versa*). Old age and drowning are the only complaints to which the inhabitants are heirs. There has never been a murder nor suicide in all that 'right little tight little island.' The uplands, bright with flowering shrubs, are swept by life-giving breezes; the wooded dells (for they are too small to be called dales) have no damp save the spray of the sea. Food is cheap, and there is no need for fashionable attire; hence it happens, though the people are poor, they have enough, and are contented—that is, the aboriginal inhabitants—but then there are (sometimes) others whose company might be spared. It is whispered that now and then this Elysium is visited by certain gentry, who are not so much in search of the sublimities of nature, as of a spot which is (in a general way) out of the jurisdiction of the police.

The government of the place is paternal; the seigneur who rules it is literally a feudal lord; and in case of any crime being committed by a vassal, such as over-populating the place, he can 'deport' the offender. It is even asserted that, if there be reason to suspect that such a misdemeanour may ensue, he has power to forbid the bans of a young couple; so that if they are bent on matrimony, they must emigrate elsewhere, where there is 'room and verge enough' to bring up a family. The accommodation is of course limited; and if once the population should outgrow their means of subsistence, what is to become of them all when the winds and waves forbid the arrival of provisions? There is a terrific example before these good folks in the rabbits which throng their little territory. No other crime that ever I heard of has been committed in this marine Eden. There are no rogues. Your portmanteau is left on the beach, without the least fear of its being appropriated as flotsam or jetsam. There is not even a public-house to get drunk in, so that all the vices have, as it were, to be imported; and it is not to be denied that in this great commercial era this has been done. With sherry at a shilling a bottle, and French brandy at two, the temptation is considerable, and especially to those individuals at whose existence I have hinted, who occasionally resort to the place for privacy, to escape the glare of Police-

man X.'s bull's-eye. These drink to drown Care; and if they fail, it must be because he can swim, for they certainly take enough to drown him though he were cubits high.

The excellent *curé* of the place has less influence over these *mauvais sujets* than he might (perhaps) otherwise have, from the fact that he only speaks Norman-French (which is the tongue of the isle), and they for the most part only Cockney English. It may be asked by the sentimental: But does not the influence of the Beautiful and the Grand (and a number of other adjectives with capital letters) affect these scoundrels for good? Well-meaning but speckled \* Enthusiast—no. The Italian brigand is none the better for the mountains that surround his home, or the flawless firmament that stretches over it; and marine scenery is equally inefficacious in similar cases.

When I said there was no public-house in the island, I should have added that there are, nevertheless, establishments for the accommodation of the stranger who procures from a neighbouring and larger isle his own spirituous liquors, or is content to do without them. Here is one of them; a small white farm-house (only without a farm), of two stories high, and with eight good-sized windows, that open on a natural lawn; there is no ordered garden, but the hedge that hems the little domain is of wild fuchsia; and there is a shrubbery, through which a tinkling stream runs, whose music is suddenly cut off by the sandy cliff, down which it softly falls some sixty feet into an enchanted bay—softly, so as not, in this calmest of August mornings, to disturb Thetis, who is basking on the shore, or, haply, Aphrodite, fresh and pink from the foam of the almost noiseless wave. The long blue coast, so clearly cut against the sky to eastward, is farther than it looks, so that she need not fear human eyes, even though aided by a Dolland's glasses; nor would mortal dare to peep at her over these dangerous overhanging cliffs, rich with grass and lichen, and with the heather on their topmost summits purpling in the sun.

But, alas! this was in the Golden Age, whereto the first sight of this bay transported me, and to which the recollection has carried me again. There are no goddesses now, nor even nymphs; which is quite as well under the circumstances, for there is a gentleman here, of middle age and objectionable appearance, who has evidently been bathing. If cleanliness is next to godliness, there is nevertheless, in some cases, a considerable interval; I am even inclined to believe that the proverb has done some harm, in persuading folks who patronise early 'dips' that they need not also be religious. The subject of our present observation—Mr William Roberts—for instance, has undoubtedly bathed, but I should question his having said his prayers. He is lying half-dressed upon the sand, with a short black pipe in his mouth, and an expression of countenance the reverse of devotional. 'A month more,' he soliloquises, looking spitefully round upon the sapphire sea, and the cliffs beginning to glow in the growing sun-rays—'a month more in this confounded hole.' From this remark, it may be gathered that the speaker was neither a painter nor a poet, which so far narrows the field of inquiry; but it is still difficult

\* The speckled sort are the most credulous of the species.—*Buffon*.

to guess to what calling he belongs. Mere appearance is not always to be trusted in such a matter, but he does not *look* like a clergyman; and, moreover, his attire—so far as it has at present advanced, which includes a red shirt and a pair of blue trousers—is scarcely clerical. Even if a white tie should lie among that heap of clothes which forms his pillow, it would not redeem him to that extent. Viewed from a distance, he really forms a charming bit of colour—quite carries off the landscape, as the artists say; but, as you get nearer, even the landscape, beautiful as it is, fails to carry him off. Cruel eyes, which shoot sidelong when he is addressed; a low retreating brow; and thin white lips, foully mar a face, which would otherwise be handsome, and make him, as it were, a blot upon that fair scene. What is he, and what does he there, insulting bountiful Nature with his ungrateful looks and his foul words? He is not drinking her health—this Trinculo of a fairer isle than Prospero's—I'll warrant, though again and again he puts yonder brandy-flask to his lips. The fact is, that Mr William Roberts, although a powerfully built fellow enough, feels, notwithstanding his dip, a little shaky of a morning without this stimulus, under which it is satisfactory to note that he revives. He rises, yawns, and stretches himself, and still half-clothed, saunters down to the very margin of the sea. It is at the lowest of a low spring-tide, and much that the sea at most times hides beneath her dainty fringes is now visible: smooth breadths of silver sand, set with many a sparkling shell; and here a splendid star-fish, like a Catherine-wheel without the rim; and there a glittering mass, which is a living jelly. Vast specimens of what may possibly form mermaids' chignons, sea-weeds of all sorts, strew the shore, or hang from the treacherous rocks, which are now left bare. Upon these, our new acquaintance, on his listless stroll, occasionally slips and slides, when his language is such as would shock Mr Gosse, or any other admirer of the Common Objects of the Sea-shore.

Mr Roberts anathematizes all these candidates for an aquarium under the generic but unscientific term of 'slime'; and when a shell prettier than its fellows attracts his attention, he manifests his interest in the dainty treasure by scrunching it beneath his heel; or when he comes across a star-fish larger and more radiant than common, he kicks it limb from limb—in default (one would say, to judge by his evil looks) of something human that would feel pain more. It is evident that this gentleman's temper, perhaps not naturally angelic, has of late been sadly 'tried,' and that it has broken down under the ordeal. 'A month more,' he once more soliloquises, 'of kicking one's heels in this confounded island! One night just as well have been born a savage, as live as I have been living during the last year. Nothing to see but salt water, nothing to hear but salt water—and what an infernal row it can make! nothing to eat but what comes out of the salt water, and nothing to drink'—he took out his now empty brandy-flask, and surveyed it with a reproachful air—'yes, nothing to drink but salt water. Then, when the time does come to get away, it will be the windy season, and I may be kept here for weeks by the salt water. I am not going to trust myself in one of those cockle-shells of boats that they use in these parts—no, not if I know it, unless the sea is

as smooth as a duck-pond. Why, it was just by that rock yonder that I saw two go down only last March; it was more exciting than a play; six men and a woman, and all drowned. I only wish that brute Richardson had been one of them. The idea of his giving me only half the money I had so richly earned, and refusing to pay the other half until the last day I was to be here, just to make himself certain of my remaining, and not coming home to trouble him, I suppose, the selfish, unfeeling scoundrel! I have a precious good mind to peach upon him yet. It's all very well for him to say it could do me no good to have him lagged as well as myself; but it would have done me a deal of good. One of the bitterest morsels I have had in my mouth these five years was the thought, that that villain got off scot-free when I was punished, and has been living in clover ever since. But once I get the rest of that little consideration paid up, I'll worry him; I'll pay him out for keeping me in this cursed place until the last minute. If he couldn't have helped the other thing, he could have helped *that*. Pay him out? ay, it shall go hard if I don't pay out everybody!

In this misanthropical frame of mind, Mr William Roberts proceeded to complete his toilet, and then to climb the cliff-path that led by the side of the waterfall aforesaid into the garden-ground about the inn.

On the lawn in front of the house stood a woman, middle-aged, but with some traces of beauty about her still; her hazel eyes would have been very handsome were it not for the timidity of their expression; and her features would have been well shaped, but that they were so wan. Though she did not look like a lady, the smile which came into her face as she caught sight of Mr Roberts was very sweet, and her voice sounded gentle and tender as she called out in indifferent English: 'My dear Bill, how late you are! The coffee is getting quite cold.'

'Then take care it gets warm again, that's all,' was the growling and unreasonable response.

The smile remained, but flickering indecisively, as though half afraid to stay upon her lips, and the voice was troubled and timid as it continued: 'You have been more than an hour, Bill; I almost began to think you were never coming.'

'And devilish sorry you'd have been, I daresay, if I never had come,' answered the man gruffly. 'Oh, yes, I know.' She had come forward to meet him, and tried to put her hand on his shoulder lovingly, but he fenced it off. 'You are like dogs, you women, uncommon affectionate to those you are afraid of.'

'I was not afraid of you when I married you, Bill,' said she reproachfully, but still with a tenderness in her tone.

'Was you not? Then that only shews you must have been a most odacious young fool. But you ain't a fool *now*, at least in that respect, I reckon. You learned who was to be master *precious soon*;' and Mr Roberts for the first time that morning indulged himself with a burst of merriment.

'I did indeed, Bill,' sighed the woman wearily; and turning from him to hide her tears, she led the way into the house.

#### CHAPTER XII.—MR ROBERTS AT HOME.

It was a pleasant chamber enough, if somewhat scantily furnished, where Mr and Mrs Roberts sat

at breakfast; and the table was plentifully supplied not only with well-cooked fish, but various potted meats and preserved delicacies. The room and its accessories, indeed, would have been pronounced by any impartial looker-on as much superior to what are commonly used by those in the same station in life as Mr and Mrs Roberts. Yet one of the pair, at least, seemed greatly dissatisfied with what was provided for him; his language to the fried soles was shocking, and the coffee was consigned to a much warmer place than the kitchen before he sent it out thither to be heated. But after he had eaten and drunk, although his appetite (by reason, perhaps, of his previous devotion to the brandy) was by no means so good as his friends might have wished it to be, Mr Roberts grew somewhat mollified, and by the time he had lit his pipe and smoked a little, could be addressed, as the partner of his fortunes was well aware, without dread of immediate personal violence. As this favourable opportunity never lasted long, nor recurred before the same time on the morrow, it was highly necessary, if his lady had any wish for conversation, to take advantage of it; and she did so upon the present occasion.

'The packet will be here at ten o'clock or so, my dear, our landlady tells me. It has been sighted an hour ago. Perhaps it will bring us some letters.'

'Who wants letters? I don't,' was the discouraging rejoinder.

'But it is so very long, Bill, since we have heard anything from—from your folks at home.'

'For my part, I hope it will be longer. Who wants to hear? say I again. What is the good of hearing, unless, indeed, it was to say that the old man was dead!'

'O Bill, how can you talk so!'

'Ah, yes, that's mighty fine. You can afford to be shocked, *you* can, because, *you* lucky slut, *you* never had a father, leestways as I ever heard on. I say, in your case, there never was an old chap of the age of Methuselah living on and on, as though Death had forgotten him, and standing between his only son and his expectations. Father indeed! A nice father he's been to me. Why, he wouldn't even get into the witness-box, and swear me off before the beaks, as he might ha' done, and prevented all what happened afterwards, including my being moped to death on this precious island.'

'And yet, dear, I am sure we have never lived half so well, or been half so comfortable, and free from cares and fears, as we have been here.'

'And who have you got to thank for *that* but me?' was the inconsistent reply. 'Wasn't it my doing? Haven't I paid for it not only with money earned, but with my skin?'

'Indeed, dear Bill, I do think I suffered almost as much as you, while you were being so pun—so ill-used.'

'Do you? Then all I can say is, you are most confoundedly mistaken. Bread and water, and hard work—not to mention being cooped up within stone walls—are a deal worse, let me tell you, than any hurt done to the feelings. I wish they had tried to hurt *my* feelings, instead of what they did do. I wish it had been my father as they put in quod, instead of me; and then you would have seen how patiently I would have put up with it.'

'I know it must have been bad, Bill. My heart bled for you all the time; it did indeed. And I do hope—oh, I do so hope—that you may never again do anything as may bring you into such trouble again!'

'If you go on talking like that,' muttered Mr Roberts with an ugly look, 'I shall bring myself into trouble with a vengeance, and that upon your own account, you white-faced fool. Ain't it bad enough to have this misfortune thrown in my face by other people, or, at least, of running the risk of having it thrown, wherever I am, wherever I go, without *you* doing it?'

'Then why not stay here, Bill?' interrupted the woman, clasping her hands, and speaking very hurriedly. 'No one knows it here, no one ever can know it. We have enough and to spare for a long time to come to keep us as we are living now; and who knows but that before it is all gone, those expectations of which you speak may turn to realities. I will work for you, slave for you. The seigneur's lady told me only yesterday that my lace-work, if I should ever need to sell it, would fetch a great deal among some great folks she knows. Let us stay here, where you are safe, and out of temptation. Oh, never let us go back again to where all is suspicion, and fear, and danger, and one never knows what shame and sorrow the morrow may bring forth. We have never been so well off as we are here. What a pleasant house this is to dwell in; and only think how cheap in this place are the things you value most—more, I sometimes think, even than me—the brandy, and the wine, and the tobacco.'

'There is something in *that*,' observed Mr Roberts moodily, 'although all the rest is twaddle, except about the lace-work. I don't forbid you to sell anything for what it will fetch, only you must say it's for a charity, and not for ourselves. It will never do to let folks here suppose that I am anything else than a gentleman living upon his independent means, as indeed I am.'

As he sat with his feet lodged on the corner of the table, squirting tobacco-juice upon the carpet, and occasionally using a fork instead of a toothpick, the islanders (including the seigneur's lady) must have been insular indeed if they assigned to Mr William Roberts the social rank which he thus arrogated to himself; but it was plain that the speaker entertained no doubt of their credulity.

If Mrs Roberts had had a little more of that wisdom so often attributed to her sex, and which the serpent, perhaps, gave to Eve in not excessive compensation for damages, she would have permitted her husband to chew undisturbed that cud of reflection for which he was now obviously inclined, and left the seed of her suggestion alone to germ and ripen of itself. But she imprudently renewed her solicitations.

'Dear Bill,' she recommenced, 'you cannot think how I wish I could persuade you not to leave this place until some really better fortune smiles upon you. We have nothing to complain of here.'

'What!' broke in the man impatiently, 'nothing to complain of? It is all very well for *you*, who have got me all to yourself, to cozen and make a fool of, but it's not well for me. Why, I have not a soul to speak to from morning to night. Even if there is anybody worth speaking to, which I deny,

they can jabber nothing else but French. Do you think I am one of those idiots who can stare at the sky and sea all day, and want no other society than gulls and kittiwakes, like that painter who was here last month!—*You?* Yes, of course, I have you, who, however, are neither so young nor so pretty as you used to be.—There, you need not cry, you ninny; it's no fault of yours, of course, and I don't say but what you are well enough in your way; only a man wants a man to talk to him, and to smoke with him, and to drink with him. You are no *company* to a long-headed fellow like me—how should you be?

'I am very sorry, Bill,' replied the woman sadly; 'I do my best. There was a time when you said you could be happy with me anywhere, and I am sure this place, of all others that I have seen or read of, seems made to be happy in.' And she turned towards the window, as though to gaze upon the fair prospect it afforded, or perhaps to hide her tears.

'I wonder where, now, did this woman pick up that sort of nonsense?' observed Mr William Roberts, soliloquising. 'Not from her mother, if all tales I have heard of her be true; and not from Jem Dean, the trainer, who brought her up. I wonder whether he was her uncle? He ought to have been something nearer, since he gave her a hundred pounds as a wedding dowry; and yet she never could have inherited such notions from him. Well, I suppose I must humour her a bit, so long as we are shut up alone together in this wretched hole.—Look here, Bess; I am not angry with you, you know; why should I be? It's only that I felt a little moped.'

'I am glad it was only that, Bill,' returned she quietly, but still keeping her face averted.

'Of course it was.—Now, don't be in the sulks: remember what my mother told you, that you would always find me a good husband, if only you kept a smiling face. But I do hate *black looks*, and especially in one's wife.'

Mrs Roberts sighed; and turning from the window came towards her husband with the smile required. 'Your mother was always very fond of you, Bill, and I am afraid she spoiled you just a little.'

'My father made up for that,' was the sullen reply, 'for he never had a civil word to say to me; and as for the old woman, she seems to have got over her extreme devotion to her offspring, since she has not written to me for near a twelvemonth.'

'Well, Bill, you must allow you don't give much encouragement to your correspondents, as you never answer their letters.'

'Why should I, when they've got nothing inside of 'em? I answered Richardson's sharp enough when he sent me half that money instead of the whole of it—*curse him!* What's the good of such letters? Why, the very last from the old woman had nothing else in it than the news that Ellen was likely to marry that stuck-up fellow John Denton, as if I wanted to hear anything about her, and much less *that*. I hate her, and I hate the man!'

'Why should you hate poor Ellen, Bill?' returned Mrs Roberts with some faint show of excitement in her tone. 'I'm sure she has never knowingly done you any harm.'

'Knowingly or not, she *has* done me harm, and it's my belief she's a precious cunning minx.

Why has my father taken such a fancy to her, instead of to me? It is true that I do not care a snap of the fingers whether he cottons to me or not, since nothing can possibly come of it as matters stand; but in case he ever came into that property about which he is always dreaming, it would be a pretty thing if that slip of a girl should get a great slice of it: you would see the harm of it then, quick enough, I suppose.'

'I am sure, Bill, in such a case, and provided that there was plenty left for you, I should never grudge her what she got, for she has been a real good friend to us, and always did her best to reconcile her grandfather with you. Indeed, but for her, we should never have been married at all.'

'And how do I know—supposing, for the sake of argument, that our marriage has turned out the success you seem to take for granted—that that was not all a scheme of hers, to set my father against me for good and all?'

'A scheme, Bill! Why, Nelly was but a child when she persuaded her grandfather, with her pretty artless ways, to give his consent to our wedding; and if it was a scheme, your mother was also concerned in it, and I don't suppose you would impute any evil motive to her?'

'Well, I don't suppose she *meant* any harm,' returned Mr Roberts with a sneer, 'although she may have *done* harm for all that.'

'In getting you married to me, William?'

'I didn't say so, though you may wear it if the cap fits. You seem most uncommon cantankerous this morning. All that I intended to observe was, that I don't believe Miss Ellen is such an innocent dove as you paint her.'

'She was wonderful kind and good to me—kinder even than your mother—when you were in trouble, Bill, that's all I've got to say.'

'You're wise then, ma'am; for you have already said more than enough. When I observe, "I hate this man, or this woman"—for which, too, I happen to have good reasons—I do not wish to hear their virtues descanted upon. For the future, understand that, if you please.'

There was a long pause. Then, in a tone which was intended to be propitiatory, Mr Roberts observed: 'Didn't you say the packet would be coming in about ten o'clock, Bess? I think I shall take a stroll down to the harbour.'

The change of voice, even though it was but the alteration from downright menace to bare civility, called up the colour in the woman's cheeks as she caught up his straw-hat, with anxious eagerness to please, and placed it upon his head. Mr Roberts nodded in gracious acknowledgment of this service. 'I daresay you'd like to come with me yourself?' growled he reluctantly.

'Indeed—indeed, I should, Bill,' cried she joyfully. 'We have not been out for a walk together for weeks, and it's such a beautiful day! I will not keep you two minutes while I put on my bonnet.' And off she ran up-stairs.

'She ought to go on with that lace-work,' muttered Mr William Roberts discontentedly. 'If she really can get money for it, every hour she wastes is a dead loss to me. I am afraid I am spoiling Mrs W. R. with these sort of treats. But, however, it's only once and away; and I'll see that she works all the harder.' The sense of this excessive indulgence of Mrs W. R.'s fancy seemed



presently, however, to affect his temper. 'Come, be quick, can't you! I'm not going to wait here all day,' bellowed he from the foot of the stairs; and with that he lounged out of the house alone, leaving his wife to follow him.

### COMETS.

A GOOD many of our readers will be inclined to think that we know already quite enough about comets, and may as well put them aside as thoroughly explored and used up; and without doubt we have extended our acquaintance with them very considerably within the last one or two hundred years. We never think of being frightened at them now, or dream of questioning their having as good right to appear as any of the planets within the limits of our system. We know that they move about the sun, as we do, though with a difference; for as the earth and other planets move in ellipses, hardly distinguishable from circles, with the sun in the focus, almost coincident with the centre, in the cometary orbits, the sun is so far from the centre, that for a large part of their course, it may be for thousands of years, many comets are out of sight and out of mind with all of us; and when they do approach us and the sun, they accomplish their little transactions in our neighbourhood in a few weeks, or even days, and then are off again millions and billions of miles into space. But there is one question connected with comets which is still as far as ever from being answered—that is, how they are constructed, what kind of material they are made of, and especially whence arise those singular appendages called tails, which to the vulgar eye are the most remarkable feature about them. To understand a little of this difficulty, let us briefly call attention to some of the many surprising feats which they have accomplished with these tails of theirs. Take, for instance, the great comet of 1680, which had the advantage of being seen by Newton. This comet astonished everybody by darting out in the space of two days a tail which covered nearly half the visible heavens, or a length of twenty million leagues; at one time, indeed, it occupied forty-one million leagues, or a distance much greater than that of the earth from the sun. The tail of the comet of 1769 extended sixteen million leagues, and that of the comet of 1811 thirty-six million leagues. Newton's comet, it was known, would have to pass so near the sun in getting round him, that apprehensions were felt for its safe return; but it accomplished the whole business in about two hours, bringing its tail safe behind it; that is to say, having whisked this enormous appendage through half a complete circle in this incredibly short time.

It is needless to dwell here upon the numerous varieties and peculiarities in the lengths and positions of the tails of different comets; it will suffice to say, that in a general way the telescopic aspect is that of a quantity of vapour escaping from the nucleus towards the sun, and then

carried directly behind the comet, as if by a repulsive force emanating from the sun, sometimes for a distance of myriads of leagues, thus forming the tail. Hence, in whatever direction the comet is moving, the tail is turned away from him, the furthest end being curved backwards, just as a flexible rod or feather would be if whirled rapidly round one extremity. Now, the great difficulty lies in conceiving the possible constitution of a body which can deport itself in the way we have been describing. We should imagine that it must sweep away planets in its wild gyrations. We hardly regard it as ridiculous that Whiston should have gravely maintained that it was by a whisk of one of these tails that the deluge was brought about, and calculated the particular comet which caused that catastrophe. However, everything goes to prove that these comets are huge impostors—head and tail alike—and are the most vapoury, windy bodies conceivable; so much so, that it is no exaggeration to say that the tail, with all its millions and billions of miles, might, if properly packed up and stowed away, travel by a continental passenger-train, and cost nothing in the way of extra luggage. This has been long known; and Sir John Herschel sees no difficulty in conceiving that the tail of a great comet, as, for instance, that of 1680, with its twenty million of leagues, might weigh only a few pounds, or even ounces. This tenuity of constitution is proved in many ways: partly by the disturbances and deviations caused in a comet's motion by the approach to any other body; and partly again, by the fact that stars have been seen to shine with undiminished lustre, alike through their heads and tails—stars which would be utterly obscured by a few feet of ordinary terrestrial mist. But, granting any amount of tenuity, it is hard to conceive such an extended mass whirled half round in two hours, and retaining its continuity. Sir John Herschel, therefore, ventured upon a conception involving the total absence of matter altogether—suggesting the hypothesis of a negative shadow; and an original thinker, speculating upon the last big comet of 1858, announced the discovery in the papers that comets were worlds on fire, most probably suffering the punishment of their wickedness; and that the light proceeding from the conflagration was invisible where the sun's rays penetrated, but was seen in the shadow cast by the head, thus producing the tail—an idea involving, among other absurdities, the necessity of all the planets appearing with black tails behind them.

But this conception of a negative shadow exactly coincides with the recent suggestion of Professor Tyndall, which we wish to lay before our readers. To make the theory intelligible, it is necessary to preface it by some short explanatory matter. We know, by every-day experience, that the solar beams bring to us light and heat; and we have hardly less constant experience, in the thousands of photographs which are hourly produced among us, of the chemical properties possessed by the same

beams. The sun's rays come to us laden with light, heat, and the chemical power which is called by the learned *actinism*. In a general way, these qualities co-exist, so that every body exposed to the sun's rays is simultaneously lighted, warmed, and actinised (if we may be allowed to coin this last word). But it is easy to separate these rays, and get one of the actions apart from the others. If we make a small hole in the shutter of a darkened room, and through it admit the sun's light, a circular, or, to speak more correctly, an elliptical patch of light will be seen upon the floor, in the straight line produced joining the sun's centre with the aperture. If we place our hand there, it will feel warmed; and on a plate properly prepared, photographic action would be recognised. The rays of light, caloric, and actinism are, in this case, travelling on in friendly company. But interpose before the aperture a piece of yellow glass bounded by parallel planes, and the elliptical patch of light will be found as before, but yellow, instead of white, and light and heat will be found still to co-exist within it, though not to the same extent and in the same proportion; while the actinic influence will have almost entirely disappeared, the rays producing it having been absorbed by the glass. By similar treatment, the hot rays and the light rays might be intercepted respectively. The separation may be effected in a different way by interposing a glass prism before the aperture; when this is done, the elliptical patch of light expands into a coloured line—the red being at one end, and the violet at the other; almost all the heat being found at the red, and the actinism at the violet extremity. By these simple illustrations we may see how the different agencies, light, heat, and actinism, though generally travelling on together in the solar beams, are really distinct and capable of separation. Up to this point we have been dealing with what has long been well known. But very recently, Professor Tyndall has discovered that if a glass tube be charged with certain perfectly transparent vapours—those, for example, of nitrite of amyl or iodide of allyl—and the electric light be thrown upon it, the effect is the immediate condensation of the vapour, and the formation of a cloud. This condensation is produced by the chemical rays, which are themselves absorbed in passing through the vapour, the cloud being of course rendered visible by the light rays, which, as well as the heat rays, are in themselves incapable of producing the effect just now described. Professor Tyndall also discovered that when he had, by certain refinements, with which we need not now trouble our readers, reduced the amount of transparent vapour in the tube to a mass which he has estimated at many million times less than that of the air in which it hung, a visible cloud was still formed as before by the action of the electric light, but of such excessive tenuity as to be incapable of dimming the weakest light when viewed through it—the flame of a candle, for instance, shining through it as clearly as in a vacuum. Hereupon, the thought struck him that he had before him an exact illustration of that spiritual texture of comets spoken of above, and a little more consideration led him to the theory which we are now about to give almost in his own words: That a comet is composed of vapour decomposable by solar light, the visible head and tail being an actinic cloud arising from such decomposition:

that while the beams of the sun comprise heat, light, and chemical rays, the last alone form the cloud, while the first tend to bring the mist back again to the condition of transparent vapour: that thus two antagonistic powers are in action, and that the state of things at any instant, and at any point in the mass, is determined by the prevalence of one or other of these two powers: that the head and nucleus absorb all, or nearly all, of the calorific rays, so that in the part of the mass screened by the head, the cloud when formed is not again vaporised, thus accounting for the position and appearance of the tail; and inasmuch as it has been proved experimentally that the decomposition of the vapour may either be made to take place slowly or instantaneously along the whole beam, we thus escape the difficulty arising from the supposition of the projection of matter with the enormous velocity hitherto required to account for the rapid and extensive development of the tail; while the tail being no longer, on this supposition, composed of the same matter, but of a succession of new matter, across which the line from the sun to the head produced successively passes as the comet moves round in its orbit, we avoid the supposition of the stupendous whisking of the tail which has hitherto proved so great a difficulty: again, that the old tail, as it ceases to be screened by the nucleus, is dissipated by the hot rays, whence the bending towards the end of the tail, which arises from the small though finite time taken by the hot rays to travel along the whole length of this tail: and finally, that as a temporary advantage may occasionally be gained by the actinic over the hot rays, even in localities unscreened by the head and nucleus, we may account in this way for those temporary and unusual streamers which sometimes are seen directed towards the sun. Professor Tyndall further expresses his belief that there may be comets composed of vapour undecomposable by the sun's rays, and therefore invisible, through which the earth may have passed without our knowledge; and states his conviction that a few ounces of iodide of allyl vapour would suffice to produce an actinic cloud equal in size and brightness to Donati's comet, which astonished and delighted us all eleven years ago.

If these speculations are sound, and there really is nothing at first sight to suggest the contrary, the history of our knowledge of comets supplies us with one of the most instructive illustrations of the inroads of science upon ignorance and superstition. Not many hundred years ago, comets were regarded with a mixture of awe and wonder, their appearances and disappearances being equally inexplicable. Sometimes they were hailed as the souls of departed great ones, and sometimes deprecated as the messengers of divine wrath. From Newton's time onward these views disappeared. It was found that whatever else they may be, comets were at anyrate ordinary matter, subject to the inflexible laws of gravity and other similar indignities, which no great man's soul ever could put up with. Still, we were anything but easy in their company, and within the memory of many among us, the presence or expectation of a comet set all our nerves tingling, and old ladies used to talk of finding shelter in their water-butts, preferring death by drowning to one by fire. Now, it turns out that all this sensation has been caused by a shadow, or the nearest possible approach to a

shadow, a mist of such infinite tenuity that all the appliances of human art can scarcely produce its counterpart.

## JACK HAVILAND.

### I.

JACK HAVILAND was a fair specimen of public-school training. He had spent six years at Eton, and had been successively 'plucked' in three examinations—for the University, the Army, and the Civil Service of India. To the examiners of Oxford he had declared that Moses was the son of Adam; to those of Chelsea, that Heligoland was an island in Africa; and to those at Burlington House, that the leader of the first crusade was William of Orange. These brilliant answers having failed to convince the authorities, he had made up his mind that the public services had entered into a league against him, which it was vain to resist.

This resolution was the easier to keep as Jack Haviland had no one to goad him to active exertion. His only living relative was a maiden aunt. But this lady having viewed with extreme disfavour the results of his scholastic trials, and Jack having heard from her own lips that the provision intended to be set down for him in her will would probably amount to one shilling sterling, he had wisely reflected that the possession of an aunt of this kind was as good as having none at all; and he had made his arrangements in consequence.

Happily for him, he was not altogether destitute of means. He enjoyed two hundred pounds a year of his own and a cottage by the sea. But this was all he had in the world; and his prospects of ever obtaining more were excessively slender. However, he was of a gay, light-hearted temper; always ready to take the bright view of things; and looking upon life as a sort of game of football, in which it was absurd to mind a few kicks on the shins. Disappointments which would have hopelessly soured less happy minds than his, had left his soul as calm as a summer lake. He really did not know what it was to be put out; and the hardest epithet he ever applied to the numerous ills which checker life was, that this or that was 'rather awkward,' an ejaculation he used indiscriminately on the breaking of a meerschaum pipe, the being stumped out in a county match, or the losing of fifty pounds.

With such a disposition it was but natural that Jack should have many friends. He was a universal favourite with all who had ever known him; and in the snug seaport where his dwelling was there was no man so thoroughly popular. He was always doing a good turn for somebody. His mission on earth seemed to be to oblige people. If any service was to be rendered to man, woman, or child, any commission executed, any important errand run, he was the person to do it. He belonged to every soup and clothing club in the place. Beggars knew him by name, and touched their hats to him in the street. Stray dogs followed him home at nights with the certainty of being housed and fed. He was an out-and-out good fellow, that was the truth of it; and he had as pleasant and cheery a face as it was possible to meet with in any town of England from Land's End Point to Berwick-upon-Tweed. Of course he was young; and this fact, added to his vigour of limb and handsome features, made him the abject slave of woman-

kind. In the morning he was to be seen rushing, breathless and hot, along the Marine Parade with six or eight parcels under his arm: these were worsteds he had been sorting for Mrs Curry-combe, the rector's wife. Two hours later, he might be detected on his way to Mrs Maydew's villa with a heavy cargo of sensation novels in tow. In the afternoon, it was Miss Bohea who wanted to consult him about her parrot. In the evening, Mrs Colonel Bowlemdown expected him to tea. Jack Haviland was anywhere and everywhere when wanted. All the ladies of the town had a joint-stock interest in him; and it was a sort of rivalry among them as to which should lay the most frequent taxes upon his ever cheerful readiness.

Under these circumstances, it was not without a certain emotion that the female population of Shingle-super-mare began to reflect, that for six weeks past and more Mr Jack had been much less frequently seen than formerly. His appearances upon the parade had become unaccountably few and far between. Two projected picnics had been given up from his inability to attend at them; and three dinner-parties had actually taken place without his having been present amongst the guests. The ladies of Shingle began to murmur. This desertion was something quite novel and strange. It could not be put up with at any price; and something must be done to find out the why and the wherefore of such highly censurable conduct. An ambassador—in the person of Thomas, Mrs Maydew's 'buttons'—was despatched to the shirker's abode, to inquire if any mishap had befallen him. But Thomas returned no wiser than he had gone. Mr Haviland, he reported, was not at home. His housekeeper had stated, upon cross-examination, that of late he had taken to leaving the house at ten A. M. and not returning till night; but whence and from what cause such a vagabondising humour, neither Mrs Nuffin (the housekeeper) nor he (Thomas) could explain.

This news caused a mighty commotion when Mrs Maydew gave it out at Mrs M'Hotscone's tea-party. The whole party burst into exclamations. Mrs M'Hotscone declared it 'very strange now;' Mrs Maydew pronounced it 'incomprehensible;' Mrs Curry-combe thought it 'unkind;' Miss Bohea hoped 'that nothing might come of it.' And then all these ladies remained for a moment silent; for the same thought had traversed all their minds—a horrid thought, which caused them of a sudden to bridle up together and, each in secret, to vow vengeance upon the culprit. If Mr Jack Haviland was nowhere to be found, it must surely be that he had been enthrallled. But none save woman could have done this deed; and so—logical but bitter conclusion!—Mr Jack Haviland was no doubt in love!

### II.

Alas, poor Jack! Not even upon him had the elfin god had pity. Right in the centre of his good stout heart had the barbed arrow struck; and it was of no use trying to pull it out. There it was, and there it must stay through sorrow and joy, through day and night, till gray old years and Father Time deemed well to close the wound.

He had fallen in love! Yes, one day on the beach, whilst picking up pebbles with the little M'Hotscones. The weather was cloudy, and the sea was running high. The wind, like an ill-bred

urchin, was romping about over land and water, covering people with spray, and casting up seaweed in gigantic handfuls, to throw at the passers-by. The little M'Hotstones were merry and soused. Jack Haviland had seen his hat disappear in the gust, and sail in triumph up the British Channel. Everything was going on well, when, of a sudden, *br-r-r-oum!* crash! and a monstrous wave, as big as a house, burst foaming, raging, and splashing on the beach. Away, with howls of terror, rushed the little M'Hotstones, abandoning a whole fortress of pebbles to the fury of the elements. Away also rushed a whole bevy of nurserymaids, children, and startled young ladies, like leaves in autumn before a south-west wind. Screams and laughter mingled with the noise, and—*br-r-r-oum!* crash! down came a second wave. This time the last remaining stragglers took to flight, but not quite fast enough to prevent two pretty maidens, who had been wandering too near the shore, from being overtaken by the treacherous tide, and bathed up to their waists in water. In ten seconds, Jack, who had been on the look-out, was bearing them both up in his arms. There was a great deal of pretty crying, a great deal of alarm in the tearful blue eyes, a great deal of sudden paleness on the little pink cheeks; but, on the whole, there was more fright than hurt. Before the third big wave had burst its bounds, both were standing high and dry, and not very much the worse for their wetting. As was natural, however, Jack protested strenuously against their going home in their wet clothes. His own cottage was a hundred yards off. They must come there and dry themselves, whilst he sent up to their house to get them other dresses. There was no refusing. A silver flask had already been produced from Jack's breast-pocket, and the contents soon brought a warm glow back to the pallid faces. The two young ladies began to stammer their thanks to their rescuer; next they began to laugh at their own wretched plight; and by the time the cottage was reached, the accident had become a joke, and they were little geese to have ever felt so frightened at it.

This was the beginning of Jack's misfortune. The two young ladies were cousins, and both of about the same age—eighteen. One was Miss Lucy Chatfield; the other, Miss Annie Heywood. It was Miss Lucy who spoke to Jack, and told him this. Her father, Mr Chatfield, was a rich city merchant, who lived in London all the week, and only came down to Shingle from Saturday till Monday. Miss Lucy had no mother, and Annie Heywood was staying with her on a visit. Miss Lucy hoped that Mr Haviland (whose card she put into her muff) would come and call on them; papa would be delighted to see him; and 'Annie and I'—this was said with a blush—should be very glad to thank him again. The address was Beauchamp Villa, on the road to the cliff.

When Miss Lucy Chatfield and Miss Annie Heywood had come out of Jack's room, where they had put on the warm dresses brought down to them by their maid—when they had shaken hands with him, and gone away smiling in the most prosaic of four-wheeled flies, our hero felt as though two rays of sunshine had left his dwelling. The cottage seemed dark, and Jack felt miserable. He picked up a tiny wet glove which he knew to be Miss Lucy's, and kissed it. After

that, he ran to the almanac to see what day it was, and almost swooned with joy to find it was Friday, and that consequently, as Mr Chatfield would be at home on the morrow, he might call with perfect propriety at Beauchamp Villa. That evening he absented himself from a party where his presence was indispensable for the getting-up of charades, and wandered about on the beach till twelve o'clock, just near the spot where he had saved Miss Lucy. In a word, he behaved most irrationally, and took no breakfast next morning from sheer excitement of mind.

Mr Chatfield received him very well, and invited him to dinner on Sunday. Jack feared he should go mad when he found himself seated at table next Miss Lucy, and helping her to wine. In the drawing-room, she presided at the urn, and he thought he had never tasted anything so delicious as the tea she had brewed with her own hands. He took three cups of it. Mr Chatfield, finding him a pleasant guest, asked him to call again, which he promised to do with every intention of keeping his word. On his way home, he indulged in a delirious hornpipe by the sad sea-waves, to the mute stupefaction of a local policeman.

Love never does things by halves with such gentlemen as Mr Jack Haviland. By the end of a week, Jack found he could think and dream of nothing else but Lucy Chatfield. He was like a man who has stared too hard at the sun, and sees a luminous spot continually dancing before his eyes. He passed his days in alternations of giddy bliss and pitiable wretchedness, according as his suit seemed to prosper or fail. He was 'gone, gone all over,' as he himself expressed it; and as flame, when it rages so hotly as this, is contagious, Miss Lucy herself began soon to wonder how it was that her heart fluttered so fast whenever she met Mr Jack. At first, the meetings were confined to chance encounters on parade, once or so every other day. Gradually, the meetings grew more frequent and prolonged, until at last 'chance' became so complainant, that the lovers met twice a day.

And then it was that the habit of long walks set in—long walks on the cliff, in country roads, on the desert parts of the beach; anywhere where they could be alone. Lucy, no longer timid, as at first, leaned innocently on Jack's strong arm, accepting the plea that it was prudent to do so, lest another big wave should come and sweep her down. Annie Heywood, who was the constant companion of these walks, had a true feminine tact for straying a few yards before or a few yards behind, that those adorable nothings, so sweet to exchange when there are only two to hear them, might not remain unspoken from the presence of a third. Jack was happy, and Lucy was happy too. No thought of to-morrow came to mar the *naïve* illusions of their dream; they lived only in the present, loving each other more and more every day. And once, when Jack had allowed his lips to whisper the first trembling confession of his heart, he drew his arm round Lucy's waist, and kissed her; and she, happy at what he had said, and not afraid to shew her happiness, did as he bade her, and returned his kiss.

### III.

Two months had passed since the day when they had first met, and Jack Haviland's protracted absence from all the festivities of Shingle had



begun to sow bitterness and wailing in the female camp. The most terrible suppositions had already been set afloat by the joint ingenuity of Mrs M'Hotstone and Miss Bohea. The local journal had solemnly announced the arrival at Shingle of Mademoiselle Gredinette of the *corps de ballet* of the Paris Opera; and putting this fact together with the other fact of Jack's desertion, Miss Bohea inquired whether it were not possible to deduct therefrom a most scandalous conclusion. But it is fair to say that Miss Bohea remained alone of her opinion. The other ladies could not bring upon themselves to suspect Jack Haviland of so much blackness. Besides, Mademoiselle Gredinette had not remained in Shingle for more than two days, and she had been escorted both on arrival and departure by the Right Honourable the Earl of Wheezylung, a peer of the realm. Whilst queries and wonders, suggestions and exclamations, were still running riot, Mrs Maydew appeared one Sunday morning at St Marigold's Church with a look of triumph on her countenance. During the whole time of service, she cast looks of intelligence at Mrs M'Hotstone, Mrs Curry-combe, and Miss Bohea; and as soon as the service was ended, she hastened out, so as to meet her friends, and tell them all about it.

'Oh! would you believe it, my dear Mrs M'Hotstone, after all our kindness to him, to abandon us all for a girl like that?'

'Who can it be?' inquired Mrs M'Hotstone.

'Who is it?' asked Mrs Curry-combe.

'Who?' gasped Miss Bohea.

'Why, none other than that little Miss Chatfield, the child with auburn hair, who lives at Beauchamp Lodge, and has a father too proud to call upon any one.'

'Mr Chatfield the banker?'

'No; he's a timber-merchant, or a drysalter, or something of the kind. He's immensely rich, and I can't make out how he can accept such a man as Jack Haviland for his son-in-law. Mr Haviland hasn't a single sixpence.'

'Not a penny,' muttered Miss Bohea.

'But is it all settled then?' asked Mrs M'Hotstone.

'I don't know, I'm sure; but I suspect it must be. Mr Haviland no longer comes to St Marigold's on Sundays. He doesn't like to lose sight of his little waxy-flaxy miss for a single minute. I met him on Parade this morning, going with a smiling face to Mr Jumper's tabernacle.'

'A dissenting chapel!' exclaimed Mrs Curry-combe in horror.

'That young man has no regard for his soul,' cried Miss Bohea.

'I shouldn't have believed it of him,' said Mrs M'Hotstone; and the four ladies, mortally shocked at what they had heard, wended their way all chattering together.

'We must agree to cut him,' began Miss Bohea, who, from being the tenderest of Jack's admirers, had become of late the bitterest of his foes. 'We must scratch him off our visiting-lists.' The word *scratch* was pronounced with singular vehemence; so much so, that the other three ladies gave a start, then looked at each other, and finally smiled.

'After all,' said Mrs M'Hotstone, who had a warm Scotch heart, 'Jack's a gude laddie, and he couldn't always remain a bachelor. He'll make a canny bridegroom, and we'd best think of wishing him a bonny wife and a fair armful of bairns.'

Miss Bohea felt it binding upon her to blush.

'If he'd only not chosen a dissenter!' observed Mrs Curry-combe, relenting.

'Yes,' sighed Mrs Maydew; 'but we'll get him to convert his wife: you and Mr Curry-combe will manage that, dear.—What a delightful sermon that was the rector gave us this morning!'

Mrs Curry-combe's brow cleared up entirely. 'I'm glad you liked the sermon, dear; William and I worked at it together.—But, dear me, here he is in person!' exclaimed the rector's wife, glancing down the street.

'Who? William?'

'No, no; Jack Haviland.'

And so it was. Mr Jack, making fearful gestures with his arms, and walking at a break-neck pace, was looming in the distance. He seemed to be unconscious of surrounding objects, and was frightfully pale.

'Why, what can have happened?' cried Mrs Maydew; 'he looked so happy this morning.'

'He's not himself at all now,' said Mrs M'Hotstone, terrified.

'I think he's in a state of inebriation,' observed Miss Bohea.

'Mr Haviland! Mr Haviland! Why, don't you intend to speak to us?' cried out Mrs Curry-combe, as Jack, with his eyes cast down, seemed about to rush by without stopping.

Jack looked up startled, raised his hat mechanically, and stared vacantly at the group. 'Good-morning, ladies,' he stammered in an altered voice. 'I beg your pardon; I had not seen you.'

He spoke absently, scarcely knowing what he said. Mrs M'Hotstone took pity on him. 'The poor fellow's ailing,' she whispered; and the ladies—with the exception of Miss Bohea—nodded kindly, to give Jack an excuse for going his way. He made a second bow, and continued his course without looking to right or left. Something was clearly the matter with him.

'I wonder what it can be?' exclaimed the four ladies together, and they parted with every variety of conjecture and surmise.

'It's not very difficult to guess,' said Miss Bohea with an intonation of triumph; 'that little Miss Chatfield must have jilted him.'

At all events, not of her own accord, poor girl; for if Miss Bohea's suspicion was right in the letter, it was quite incorrect in the spirit. Jack had not been jilted; he had only been told that his dream of happiness was at an end—that was all; but was it not enough, and had he not reason to clasp his fists as he went, to vow that he was the most miserable being alive, and to plan throwing himself into the sea that very night as soon as ever the moon should have risen?

This is what had happened: Jack, that morning, had got up as usual without a cloud to dull his heart. He had breakfasted confidently off two poached eggs, and had set out for Mr Jumper's place of worship, righteously purposed to attend to that reverend man's exhortations, and to make himself a cheerful soul by looking as frequently as he could during service at Miss Lucy Chatfield in the pew opposite him. He had arrayed himself in his best, had stuck a bright moss-rose bud within his button-hole, and had drawn on the choicest pair of dogskin gloves, quoted four shillings and sixpence in the market. His chin new reaped, his hair well brushed, and his whiskers trimly

combed, had all created the most favourable impression upon the congregation at the tabernacle. Mr Jumper, who had detected in him a proselyte, eyed him approvingly, on ascending the pulpit; and Mrs Jumper, who had had him shewn into her pew, presented him with her hymn-book. Albeit, as the service progressed, Jack's brow began to lower. At a quarter past eleven, neither Lucy, nor Annie Heywood, nor Mr Chatfield had yet appeared. Twenty minutes, twenty-five, half an hour elapsed, and yet no sign of the party. Jack's brow became overcast. The sermon commenced, and Mr Jumper with fervid eloquence began prophesying unpleasanties to the 'miserable sinners' around him. It became evident that Lucy would not appear that day. Jack felt himself oppressed with all the terrors that the human mind, when suffering from the pains of love, can forge. He felt himself stifling in the close-packed chapel. His fears grew apace, and, to the speechless scandal of the congregation, he rose in the very midst of the sermon—at the pathetic point where Mr Jumper, with a view to his special conversion, was describing the joy of the black sheep who has been washed—and bolted out.

When once outside, however, he had a moment's hope. Susan, one of the housemaids at Beauchamp Villa, was standing on the chapel steps, and as soon as he appeared, drew a letter mysteriously from her pocket, handed it him, and without saying a word disappeared. It was not in Lucy's handwriting this letter, and Jack heard his heart throb again with all its fears as he tore open the envelope. This is what he read:

MY DEAR MR HAVILAND—All has been discovered. Mr Chatfield came home last night in dreadful anger, having been told by somebody, we do not know whom, that you were in the habit of going out walking with us every day. He scolded poor Lucy all the evening yesterday, and again this morning. He is the more furious as she has held out bravely that she loves you, and will marry no one but you. I believe Mr Chatfield will call upon you to-day, but I am afraid he will be very harsh, for he speaks most bitterly, and talks of sending off Lucy to France, and putting her in a convent, if she will not promise never to speak to you again. We are both very unhappy. Lucy has cried all the morning. I send this by Susan; and am, my dear Mr Haviland, very faithfully yours,

ANNIE HEYWOOD.

Jack grew cold as he finished this letter, and we know the state in which he ran home. Fortunately, it was Sunday, and the chemists' shops were closed, or else there is no telling to what lengths he might have run, had any one been found to sell him, upon his own recognisances, a dose of prussic acid. He ran so fast, and was so entirely absorbed in his own reflections, that he did not notice the frowning features of Mr Chatfield, who was mounting guard outside his cottage, and who, as soon as he had rushed in with his head downcast, strode menacingly after him, and banged for ten good seconds at the door with a furious double-knock. Jack had not yet had time to take off his gloves. He opened his sitting-room door, and heard a vibrating voice inquire of his housekeeper if he were at home.

'He's just come in, sir,' answered the terrified Mrs Nuffin, who had never heard anything like that knock before.

Mr Chatfield, without waiting to be announced, walked straight into the room where Jack Haviland was, and, confronting him with an angry stare, began abruptly: 'Do you consider yourself a gentleman, Mr Haviland?'

'I hope so,' stammered poor Jack, growing very red, and feeling very guilty.

'Ah, you hope so. Well, I am glad there seems to be some doubt of the fact in your mind, for I should like to know, sir, whether you consider it becoming a gentleman to make love to a young girl during her father's absence—to profit by the circumstance of my being in London six days of the week, to sing your maudlin love-songs in a mere child's ear—and to encourage that child to open defiance and disobedience of me? I ask you, sir, do you consider that conduct becoming a gentleman?'

'I love Miss Chatfield,' faltered Jack, not finding anything else to say.

'You love Miss Chatfield!' repeated the merchant, waxing more indignant as he continued to speak. 'And may I ask, sir, who you are, who pretend to love Miss Chatfield? What are your means of existence? How do you live? What are your claims to the hand of a young lady in my daughter's position? Are you a peer of England?'

Jack shook his head despondingly.

'A millionaire?'

Jack gave a sigh.

'A man of talent? A great author? A painter? A rising barrister?'

'I am nothing,' murmured Jack.

'Are you even an honest man, sir?' exclaimed Mr Chatfield, raising his voice till it shook the room, and crossing his arms contemptuously.

'Ah! there, yes,' cried Jack Haviland, with a red-hot glow on his face; 'I may have been thoughtless, Mr Chatfield, but I am an honest man.'

'That's very easily said, sir,' rejoined the merchant coldly. 'How much have you a year?'

'I've only two hundred pounds and this cottage,' answered Jack Haviland humbly. 'But you do not intend to judge of my honesty by the extent of my fortune, I hope?'

'But indeed I do, Mr John Haviland,' answered Mr Chatfield with a sneer, 'for if you had been the honest man you pretend yourself, you would assuredly have known, sir, that a man lays himself open to very ugly suspicions, when, having but twelve shillings a day to live upon, he makes love to the daughter of a man who has a hundred thousand pounds at his banker's.'

'I swear I never thought of your fortune,' cried Jack impulsively. 'Had you been poorer than I, it would have been just the same. You cannot think, Mr Chatfield, that there was ever a single mercenary wish in my love for Miss Lucy?'

'Prove it,' said the merchant sternly.

'How?' faltered Jack, feeling his heart drop within him.

'That is a strange question, sir!' exclaimed Mr Chatfield, pronouncing each of his words with terrible conciseness. 'You tell me that you ignored the extent of my fortune. Well, I reveal it you now: my daughter will at my death have ten thousand pounds a year. If your views have been so disinterested as you now affirm, you cannot but be struck with the immense disproportion that exists between Miss Chatfield's position and yours. And if you wish me to hold you guiltless of any

unworthy motives, of any fault, indeed, save that of thoughtlessness, you know very well how you must act.'

Jack became deadly pale, and drew his hand across his brow. 'Yes,' he said in a broken voice, 'you want me to promise that I will not speak again to Miss Chatfield.'

'I wish you to swear upon your word of honour as a gentleman that you will break off all further connection of any sort with my daughter. Do you promise?'

Jack hesitated a moment, and cast an imploring look at the merchant, whose features remained impassible.

'Very well,' he said sadly; 'I give you my word. But I think it will be better if I go away. I will leave England to-morrow, and not return until—until—yes, until Miss Chatfield be married.'

The merchant nodded; but he looked more attentively at Jack after the latter had spoken these words. There was even something like a trace of emotion on his face, and it was in a much softer voice that he said, holding out his hand: 'I accept your word, Mr Haviland, and confess that my estimate of you was a wrong one. But you must not bear me a grudge for the way I am acting. If you were in my place, you would understand that I have the welfare and happiness of my child to look to, and that I am bound to follow the promptings of my reason and my judgment.'

'If I were a father, I should no doubt act as you are doing,' said Jack mournfully. 'I am sorry I did not think of this before; but I will go away to-morrow, and you must tell Miss—Lu—Miss Chatfield to forget me.'

The merchant did not feel so satisfied with himself as he had done a moment or two before. He ought to have taken his leave, and yet he said: 'It will be a great inconvenience to you to go away so suddenly,' he said with hesitation: 'you have probably many matters to settle; debts to pay perhaps. Will you allow me to take these off your hands?'

'No,' said Jack quietly; 'I have no debts whatever. I have nothing to settle either. I shall give this cottage to my housekeeper, who used to be my nurse; and I can start the first thing to-morrow morning.'

'Are you in need of money?'

'No; thank you. I had laid by a little store for a rainy day; and the rainy day has come.'

He opened his desk and shewed the merchant a little heap of five-pound notes. Mr Chatfield had become thoughtful. 'You have no debts,' he said pensively, 'and with two hundred pounds a year only you can manage to lay by. That speaks well for your training.'

'I was very idle at school,' said Jack reddening, 'and I know next to nothing; but whilst my father yet lived, that is, whilst I was still a child, he taught me two maxims, which he said contained the measure of all earthly wisdom: "Don't tell lies; and don't get into debt."'

'And you have observed these maxims?'

Jack's eyes beamed truthfully at the merchant. 'Yes,' he said simply.

IV.

Mr Chatfield left Jack's cottage with a host of new reflections in his mind. For the first time in his life he began to suspect that there was some-

thing on earth as honourable as birth, great wealth, or famous talent, and that was plain, unboasting honesty. He had never been a hard man; on the contrary, he passed for generous and feeling; but in common with most men in this mercenary age, he shared the idea that human merit was always to be measured by the standard of gold, and that where gold was wanting to prop it, virtue could never be very strong or very steadfast. He had always felt a certain contempt for poor men, and he grounded this feeling on the incontrovertible fact, that those who are obliged to battle continually against want must become narrow-minded at last, from the perpetual struggle and contact with petty miseries. It had never yet occurred to him that wealth was only a relative condition, and that some men could be richer with hundreds than others with millions. But, above all, it had never yet struck his mind that a man who brings to his wedding contract a spotless name, a rigid inflexibility of principle, and a cheerful heart, happy with little, and free from greed, has more to offer than any wealth that can be expressed in figures.

After wandering about some time and nearing his house, he turned suddenly back, and went again towards the town. He knew several people amongst the leading families, and he called upon them all, one after another, to gather information about Jack Haviland. Everywhere he heard the same thing. If ever Nature had made a good, honest, and amiable character, it was certainly Mr Haviland's. No man was so ready to do good; no one was so kind and even-tempered; no one so thoroughly unselfish, and so completely indulgent for the failings, vices, or caprices of others. The world is not altogether so ungrateful as it is painted. People do not always delight to repay kindness and service by slander. The astonished merchant saw more than one eye glisten with genuine tears of emotion whilst Jack's honest virtues were being descanted on. It began to be remembered, that on no one occasion had Jack ever been heard to say an unkind thing of any one; whilst, on the other hand, it was everywhere confirmed that he was invariably first to take the defence of those who were accused or maligned. Again, many acts of rare and touching delicacy were quoted of him; quarrels had been appeased by his means, reconciliations effected, and deeds of large and generous charity were attributed to him, the more surely as he had always denied them.

Mr Chatfield returned home towards evening in a silent, thoughtful mood. He found Lucy with her eyes very red, and her pretty face quite sad from weeping. He kissed her, and told her not to cry; but during dinner he scarcely said a word, and as soon as he rose from table, he shut himself up in his study, and remained there walking up and down for nearly two hours. When he came out, his face bore an unusually serious though mild expression. He held a letter in his hand, and rang the drawing-room bell. 'Take that to Mr John Haviland, at the Cliff Cottage,' he said; and when the servant had gone out, and when he had heard the house-door close on him, he heaved a sigh of relief, like a man who has done a good action, and has reason to be pleased with it.

'Come here, Lucy,' he said in a gentle voice; and when the poor child had begun to weep again at hearing him speak so kindly, his lips quivered, and it was almost in a whisper that he spoke his

next words: 'Do you think, my darling pet, that I would ever willingly cause you a moment's pain? Do you not know that you are my only treasure on earth, and that there can be no joy or pleasure for me in life unless you have your share of it? Do you think that anything could compensate me for shedding one of your precious tears? And do you not feel that for a single one of your smiles, I would do all that is humanly possible? Then trust to me, dear child, and never fear but that your happiness will be the sole guide to my actions, the only end to which I shall look.'

Lucy went to bed a little comforted, but with her heart still very heavy. Mr Chatfield waited till the footman had returned from the cottage; inquired if the note had been delivered safely, and then retired too. For the first time for many years, he retired to rest without reading the money articles in the weekly reviews, a task he always reserved for Sunday night. The fact was, his mind was very far from scrip and share that evening.

Jack was silently and sorrowfully packing up his boxes when Mrs Nuffin, who had been apprised of his departure, and thrown into a state of trembling wonder by it, brought up the merchant's note. Jack broke the seal without much excitement. The letter contained only these words:

MY DEAR MR HAVILAND—I should be very glad if you could call at Beauchamp Villa to-morrow towards eleven, for I have something to say to you.—Yours sincerely,

ROBERT CHATFIELD.

Jack put the letter in his pocket, and continued to pack. He did not go to bed at all that night—sleep would have been impossible; so he passed his time in looking over all his domestic treasures, laying by a number of things which he intended to send as 'keepsakes' to the numerous children by whom he was known and loved. He wrote also a few letters to different friends, ascribing his departure to a desire to travel—which indeed was strictly true, for he could no longer have borne to remain at Shingle. When all this was done, he slipped out of the house towards midnight, and went down to the beach, to the most deserted part of it, where he had taken his last walk with Lucy. He remained there listening to the monotonous but soothing roll of the waves till daybreak; and no one who had met him, as he returned home peaceful and composed on the morrow, could have guessed how deep and real was the sorrow that lay under his placid features.

One of his most trying moments was the parting with Mrs Nuffin, who was not at all to be comforted with the gift of Jack's cottage and furniture. The good woman invoked all the principles of common law and equity against the abandonment of an old nurse. It was contrary to the justice of the land, she affirmed; and as she was an old woman, and had but little more time to live, Jack might very well have waited until she died before beginning his ramblings abroad. Jack, who could not trust himself to remain calm a single moment where others were crying, was obliged to snatch himself away without listening. 'Drive to Beauchamp Villa,' he said to the driver on whose fly his boxes were piled; 'and after that, you'll have to take me to the station.'

On reaching the villa, Jack Haviland's heart began to beat so fast that he had scarcely strength to knock. He was shewn into an empty parlour,

but a minute after the footman returned, and requested him to walk up to the drawing-room. Jack followed, hanging his head despondingly, and wishing he had been spared the last trial of coming to that house, into which he never more would enter. The servant announced him in a formal tone, and withdrew. Jack raised his eyes doubtfully, and then turned ashy pale; he was in the presence not only of Mr Chatfield, but of Lucy. His first impulse was to rush forward; but he remembered his promise, and remained motionless; only, he was obliged to lean against a chair for support—he had not been prepared for this emotion.

Lucy looked at him wistfully, but at a gesture of her father's, she walked slowly towards him, and held out her hand: 'Papa says I may shake hands with you, Mr Haviland,' she said faltering.

He looked up at her, and a look of pain flitted across his face. 'Good-bye—Miss Chatfield,' he sobbed, with a desperate effort to control his voice.

Mr Chatfield appeared moved. 'Mr Haviland,' he said quickly, 'I have sent for you to propose that instead of leaving England, and so abandoning the chance of ever bettering your fortunes in this land, you should come with me to London and enter my office. We can find plenty for you to do there, and you could begin on a salary of three hundred pounds. By-and-by, there is no knowing, you might become my partner. I have heard a great deal about your uprightness and steadiness of conduct, and you are just the sort of man I should be pleased and proud to work with. Do you accept?'

Jack looked inquiringly, first at the merchant, then at Lucy, who seemed as much astonished as he.

'Ah! by the way, though, there's a condition I forgot to mention,' added Mr Chatfield; 'but it's a condition about which I hope you'll make no difficulty.'

'What is that, sir?' asked Jack in amazement. 'That you agree to marry my daughter.'

#### 'RESURGAM.'

SWEETHEART, though 'tis years since we parted,  
Are the voices of mem'ry asleep?  
Though life's river rolls broadly between us,  
And the ford with each day grows more deep.

When the spires of the chestnut are whitening,  
And the air filled with sweet hawthorn breath,  
And the words of the birds call the cowslips  
To wake up from the long winter death:

When the gray nights of winter are short'ning,  
And the day opens blue-eyed and clear,  
And the dawn with a faint streak of saffron,  
Brings the sun of the May of the year:

When the lily looks up from the river,  
And the reed from its long-frozen bed,  
Are there never faint spectres arising  
Of our love and our youth, from the dead?

In the song of the thrush and the black-bird,  
Whose voice melts us almost to tears,  
Does your heart never throw in remembrance  
A bridge o'er the river of years?